



**August 2003**

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**W**elcome to the Clark County Community Development e-News. We send this publication out once a month to announce the latest in what's happening. We will attempt to cover a broad range of topics that we hope will be of interest to you. We need your input! We welcome your comments about our news bulletin; and if you have topics you would like us to cover and we haven't, we'll do our best to accommodate you!\*

### **Paying with plastic coming soon**

One of Community Development's current projects is working with a county wide group to get the county ready to accept both credit and debit cards. To make this work, the county has to find the money to purchase software, develop a banking agreement, and have revisions made to policies and procedures. It seems straightforward, but it is more complicated than you would think, especially when so many separate interests involved.

What are the benefits to DCD of accepting credit cards? Let's look in a crystal ball and make a guess.

### **If DCD accepted credit or debit cards....**

Customers could send "runners" with plan sets and applications and never worry about having the correct check amount. Currently, if the amount owed is less than the check, the applicant must wait 6 to 8 weeks for a refund. If the check is less than the amount owed, the applicant cannot submit. The runner must go back to the office and get the correct amount. This takes additional time, expense, and is inconvenient for the applicant.

Paperwork surrounding refunds will be reduced. Having the incorrect check creates problems for DCD staff. If the refund is due, this is additional paperwork for the department in both Customer Service and Finance. This paper work flows out of the office and impacts work loads in the Auditor's Office also.

Duplicate data entry will be reduced. If the check is too small, and the staff has already entered the applicant's information, the staff must delete the information and re-enter it when the applicant arrives with the correct amount. This can be very time consuming for applicants and staff for large applications. Decreasing the number of refunds and short checks will save both customers and DCD time and effort.

### **If DCD accepted credit or debit cards and used a web payment system...**

Animal licensing payments could be streamlined for both the customer and staff. Animal control processes a large number of license fees each year from a variety of locations. Allowing credit and debit card payments especially if the payments are allowed over the web, has the potential to streamline and centralize cash handling and make licenses available any time and any place.

Notice of the need to renew licenses could also be handled over the web saving time and material costs.



Building permits for mechanical or plumbing permits or houses under "same as" plans or other over the counter permits could be processed any time, any place. Customers could make these transactions from the comfort of their offices. This could be particularly helpful to heating and cooling companies, etc. that process a high volume of these permits.

#### **In summary:**

Customers gain in reducing the incidence of over or underpayment, reduced courier time, and convenience in submission on their schedule rather than the county's office hours.

Staff gains in reduced time to respond to under and overpayment, greater cashing control, and reduced customer frustration from in-person wait times.

We probably won't see credit cards until late 2004. Accepting payments over the web via credit card will take even longer. These benefits, however, should make it worth the wait. \*

#### **Long Range Planning**

We have entered the final stretch in completion of the 10-year update to the county's Comprehensive Plan. In August, the Board of Clark County Commissioners gave approval to a draft 2003 comprehensive plan map. That signaled that work will begin on the Final Environmental Impact Statement, a Capital Facilities Plan, and proposed amendments to the Comprehensive Plan Map, policies, and implementation ordinances.

Between now and the end of the year, we will be holding public open

houses, work sessions with the board meetings with neighborhood and professional groups, public hearings with the Planning Commission, meetings with cities, and redrafting county codes, plan policies, and land use regulations.

The board has set the end of November or December as the deadline for adopting the Comprehensive Plan.\*

#### **New Faces**

Steve McKee is the new Fire Inspector in the Fire Marshal's Office. He will be inspecting existing commercial occupancies for life/safety compliance. Steve was a Senior Fire Inspector in Cowlitz county working as the Fire Marshal for over 11 years. Before that he put in 15 years in law enforcement and fire fighting in various jurisdictions. Steve enjoys reading and fire arms ballistics when he isn't at work. \*

#### **Animal Control News**

Animal Control is finally cooling off after a hot summer. The phones have been ringing off the hook with calls for dogs locked in cars, dogs with no water, and many other complaints.

With such a hot weather, it is a good time to remind people that animals should not be left in cars during the heat, even if it is not super hot outside. Animals are very susceptible to heat stroke, and in just 10 minutes outside in 80 degree weather, the inside of a car can reach 120 degrees.

So far this year we have had over 17,100 phone calls, which have culminated into over 6,300 complaints. A majority of our calls are regarding domestic pets running at large. We



#### **Quick Clicks**

- Comprehensive Plan Update
- Fax on Demand
- Team Focus
- Department Calendar

#### **Divisions**

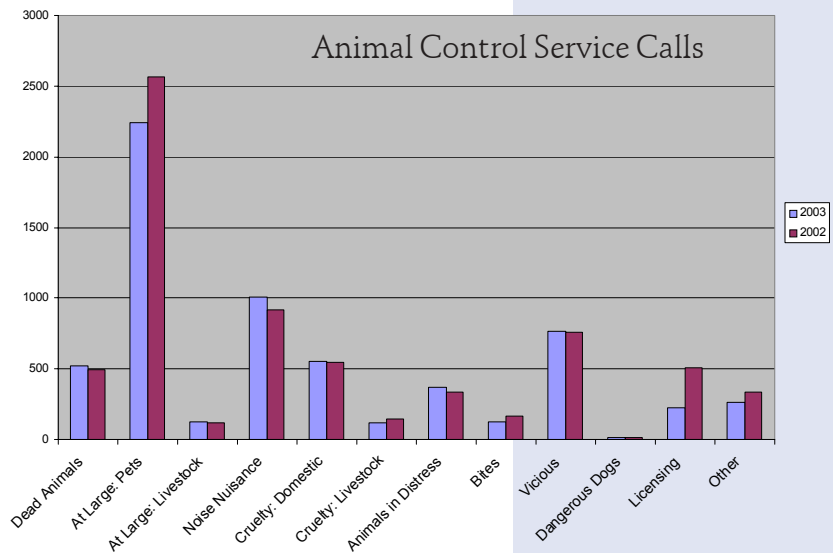
- Animal Protection and Control
- Building Division
- Code Enforcement
- Customer Service Center
- Development Services
- Engineering Services
- Fire Marshal's Office
- Long Range Planning

are aware that some people do not know that dogs must be on leash in a majority of the county. Our Enhanced Patrols, a special program, patrol area parks and schools, reminding people of our commitment to lower the number of dog bites and animals running at large in Clark County and the City of Vancouver.

Remember, Animal Protection and Control is ready and willing to do a Bite Prevention presentation at your neighborhood association meeting! Give Mary Liddle a call at (360) 397-2096 to schedule a time for our officers to come and let you know what you can do to prevent being bitten!\*

### ComDev in the News

- Farmers seek right to sell small parcels - The Columbian (7-30-03)  
[http://www.columbian.com/07302003/clark\\_co/59323.html](http://www.columbian.com/07302003/clark_co/59323.html)
- Farmers cheer land decision - The Columbian (7-31-03)  
[http://www.columbian.com/07312003/clark\\_co/59656.html](http://www.columbian.com/07312003/clark_co/59656.html)
- "Teens set school district warehouse ablaze with road flare." - The Columbian (8-8-03)  
[http://www.columbian.com/08082003/clark\\_co/61814.html](http://www.columbian.com/08082003/clark_co/61814.html)
- "Off-target: Growth plan hasn't seemed to control sprawl, proliferation of strip malls in county." - The Columbian (8-10-03)  
[http://www.columbian.com/08102003/front\\_pa/62107.html](http://www.columbian.com/08102003/front_pa/62107.html)
- "Appeals court halts storm-water ordinance," The Oregonian (8-8-03)  
[http://www.oregonlive.com/metronorth/oregonian/index.ssf?/base/metro\\_north\\_news/1060344227147620.xml](http://www.oregonlive.com/metronorth/oregonian/index.ssf?/base/metro_north_news/1060344227147620.xml)
- "An 'A' in modernity: Six new schools open this fall in Clark



County with latest trends in design." - The Columbian (8-12-03).

[http://www.columbian.com/08122003/front\\_pa/62879.html](http://www.columbian.com/08122003/front_pa/62879.html)

- "Financial clouds over downtown project." - The Columbian (8-13-03).  
[http://www.columbian.com/08132003/clark\\_co/63235.html](http://www.columbian.com/08132003/clark_co/63235.html)
- "Adventist Church denied site." - The Columbian (8-15-03).  
[http://www.columbian.com/08152003/clark\\_co/63740.html](http://www.columbian.com/08152003/clark_co/63740.html)
- "Workers at home face rule changes." - The Columbian (8-19-03)  
[http://www.columbian.com/08192003/clark\\_co/64777.html](http://www.columbian.com/08192003/clark_co/64777.html)
- "Legacy request for reimbursement denied." - The Columbian (8-20-03)  
[http://www.columbian.com/08202003/clark\\_co/64958.html](http://www.columbian.com/08202003/clark_co/64958.html)
- "Figuring Frames: County home building on summer rebound." - The Columbian (8-20-03)  
<http://www.columbian.com/08202003/business/65065.html>
- "103-lot subdivision proposed." - The Columbian (8-25-03)  
<http://www.columbian.com/08252003/business/66591.html> \*

### What's On TV Tonight?

There is a lot on CVTV (channel 23) about Community Development. For example, you can watch the animal control, land use, and code enforcement hearings, as well as the county Planning Commission. To see the complete schedule click here: [www.cvtv.org](http://www.cvtv.org) \*

### Expanding our audience

Do you know others who would benefit from this information? Any list serves that would be appropriate for us to post this on? On the other hand, if you would like to be taken off our e-mailing list, just let us know. Contact Désirée at [desiree.demonye@clark.wa.gov](mailto:desiree.demonye@clark.wa.gov) \*